

SOVIET AFFAIRS ANALYSIS SERVICE

*Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by the American Committee for Liberation.
1657 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.*

The Institute for the Study of the USSR is a free corporation of scholars who have left the Soviet Union. Its purpose is to make available to the Free World analyses of contemporary events and detailed studies of various aspects of the Soviet system by persons who know the system intimately. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect views or policies of the Institute.

Outline Of Reference Paper On:

THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES AND THE 20-YEAR PLAN FOR
THE BUILDING OF COMMUNISM

17 Nov. 1961

No. 9, 1961/62

Internal political forces, acting from almost opposite directions, have recently exerted pressure on the Soviet armed services.

For one, the Kremlin's policy on West Berlin and Bonn forced it to carry out a propaganda campaign for a sort of war psychosis in the Soviet army, to increase its preparedness and alertness.

A strengthening of the fighting capacity of the armed forces seems impossible, however, without increased support for the caste system on which they are built.

But the caste system is precisely what the other pressure now working on the Soviet military is trying to weaken, if not undermine.

An outgrowth of the 20-year plan for the building of Communism, this pressure works toward cohesion between the armed services and other sectors of the Soviet population as required by the spirit of the new Party program. The program and its new liberalized "code of ethics for the builders of Communism" have stimulated liberal tendencies in all levels of the armed forces, leading to contradictions with old moral precepts.

Formerly the basic factors of victory in Soviet military doctrine were iron discipline, the complete isolation of military personnel from the outside world, and brutal terror. These factors are on their way out, and the Kremlin must now search for new ways of restoring the weak "moral and political" consciousness of the armed forces.

CIRCULATION COPY 1

SOVIET AFFAIRS ANALYSIS SERVICE

*Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by the American Committee for Liberation.
1657 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.*

The Institute for the Study of the USSR is a free corporation of scholars who have left the Soviet Union. Its purpose is to make available to the Free World analyses of contemporary events and detailed studies of various aspects of the Soviet system by persons who know the system intimately. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect views or policies of the Institute.

THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES AND THE 20-YEAR PLAN FOR THE BUILDING OF COMMUNISM

Political pressures, exerted from almost opposite directions, have beset the Soviet armed forces in recent months. In connection with its policy toward West Berlin and Bonn, the Kremlin undertook a propaganda campaign in the armed forces to create a mass war psychosis. Khrushchev's supposed "promise" regarding concentration of Soviet forces along the Western borders and the partial mobilization of reserve units announced in his television speech on August 7, 1961, should be put down as incitement of the war spirit in the army. Publication on August 19, 1961, in the Moscow military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), of photostats of so-called "authentic" documents by the "aggressive CENTO bloc," served the same purpose. Countless meetings were held at various levels of the army and navy to proclaim combat readiness for the "final" conflict with the West. The following quotations are characteristic of the tenor of these meetings:

There must not be any trace of complacency and smugness. A maximum of military readiness, watchfulness, organization and precision in all units is a must. The situation makes this imperative (Front page editorial, Krasnaya Zvezda, August 16, 1961).

... The imperialist beasts of prey are hard on our trail, and they are capable of any provocation (Voyenny Vestnik, Military Herald, No. 3, 1961, p. 8).

Especially along the "advanced positions of the socialist camp" in East Germany, officers and enlisted men promised that:

At this time of tension, our country demands from every one of us outstanding combat and political readiness. We shall fulfill this demand with honor. We, the sentries of the Western frontier of the great Socialist camp, will raise this readiness and alertness still higher (Krasnaya Zvezda, August 15, 1961).

(more)

To augment alertness, the Soviet authorities have unearthed a device fashionable in the days following the U-2 incident in May, 1960--the vigilance campaign. A lead editorial in the August, 1961, issue of Voyenny Vestnik said in part:

It is a known fact that spies make it a point to obtain employment with frequent business trips around the country. While on these trips they engage in seemingly harmless conversations with military personnel, obtaining the information they need regarding our garrisons. . . . The imperialist intelligence is very much interested in our teachings on military strategy. The spies aim at finding out the training sites, the purpose of the training, the make-up of the recruited troops, the strategic and the technical characteristics of weapons. . . . A constant & determined battle must be waged against this outrageous evil. Development of alertness in military personnel is an extremely important task for all commanders and chiefs of political organs, and Party and Komsomol organizations (Voyenny Vestnik, No. 6, 1961, p. 5).

The other pressure that has come to bear on the Soviet armed forces works toward unity between them and other sectors of the Soviet population with respect to the 20-year plan for the building of Communism. The Soviet leadership is encountering great difficulties in this attempt. The armed forces, built on the caste principle as they are, could hardly adjust to the overall plans of Communist transformation of Soviet society without losing their combat qualities. The proclamation of the new liberalized "code of ethics for the builders of Communism" also cannot avoid stimulating tendencies towards liberalization that have lately manifested themselves among the middle and lower echelons of the commanding staff of the army.

One of the noteworthy phenomena of this new trend of liberalization is the extraordinary strengthening of internal comradely unity--the "buddy-buddy" type of solidarity among the soldiers and officers. It allows commanders to keep internal strife in the units secret from higher authorities and to spare their subordinates the hard punishment called for by the army regulations. The officers often ask: "Why should we wash our linen in public when we might be able to get away with it without getting found out?" (Krasnaya Zvezda, August 5, 1961). The "buddy-buddy" practice allows the commanders to present an incorrect picture of the combat and political readiness of their units.

A long article in Krasnaya Zvezda on August 15, 1961, by the commander of the northern group, Colonel General G. Khetagurov, points out four main shortcomings that, in his opinion, are violating the basic principles of discipline and order in the Soviet army; these are the "buddy-buddy" practice, attempts by military chiefs to "undertake the re-education of violators in all cases," weak and false activities of the "officers' comradely honor courts," and finally, a general preference for silence, rather than exposure and indictment of a soldier's rule infraction.

(more)

The problem of fighting the "buddy-buddy" system is especially aggravated by the fact that since the beginning of this year drastic revisions have been made in the principles of "Communist morality." Articles on school education now bluntly declare that "bringing up children to be informers is wrong" (Komsomolskaya Pravda, July 23, 1961), and that, consequently, the once-praised morality of Pavlik Morozov, the Soviet Union's most notorious father informer, was incorrect. Other moral precepts contained in the proposed new program and in the new rules, exhibit substantial differences with the principles cultivated in the Soviet armed forces so far. For example, "education in the spirit of ferocious hatred of imperialists and enemies of Communism," proposed to the army in the old version, has now been changed to a mere "intolerance" toward enemies of Communism in the new Party program.

All these contradictions come to the fore with each new contingent of youth conscripted into the army, since youth has been most susceptible to trends of free-thinking and liberalism common to many classes of Soviet society. Furthermore, youth clearly demonstrates the antipathy towards the caste of army officers which is typical of civilian youth. According to Krasnaya Zvezda of March 24, 1961:

It is no secret that some young people sometimes are rude and tactless towards people coming from the army. This type of action is no innocent prank. If these actions are not combated, they will have serious consequences.

Another unwelcome trend--unwelcome to the Soviet military leadership--is the wholesale disappointment of young career officers in their vocation. This phenomenon apparently has become so pronounced and widespread that military leaders were forced to undertake an extensive discussion of it in the military press. Among the "tired young men" singled out for discussion was Senior Lieutenant Engineer Daletzky. This young officer--"his eyes straightforward without any falseness in them"--wrote a letter to the editor, which can be considered typical of the abundant mail the newspapers now receive on the subject. It stated:

Quite often one reads in newspapers how passionately in love with his profession this or that officer is. Nevertheless, I have been in the service almost three years and still cannot find a man who would say: "It is my vocation to be an officer" or "Yes, I love my military profession." On the contrary, it seems to me that officers pushing forty are not serving, but marking time to finish. . . I love my profession as a radar engineer, but I would be delighted to drop the prefix of "military." (Krasnaya Zvezda, July 27, 1961).

Such assertions, when their scope is broad, undoubtedly have a bad effect on the fighting efficiency of an army and on the preservation of daily discipline.

A "vice" of the Soviet commanding officers--from the point of view of the higher Party leadership--is their indifference toward political and ideological in-

(more)

doctrination. This "shortcoming" is criticized in the military press by numerous high-ranking officers, such as Major-General A. Bukov, who charged in the No. 5, 1961 issue of Voyenny Vestnik that the army command does not immunize its subordinates by proper educational training against "alien influences":

This very important work is still full of great defects. In many places ideological work has not become really militant, aggressive, or intolerant of alien influences. Often measures are carried out nominally, merely to be able to turn in a report. (p. 60).

Still another area of activity in the Soviet armed forces that has been found wanting is the favorite Communist method of influencing the masses--"socialist competition," which is regarded with a complete lack of interest by both soldiers and officers. Aside from this and the other shortcomings in the political sphere, the Soviet army is presently undergoing a crisis of a kind in discipline. Until recently, discipline was strictly enforced, but now such breaches of conduct as hooliganism are not uncommon and often go unpunished; in the years past this was practically impossible. Soviet Marshal F. Golikov stated in his speech at the army conference of Komsomol workers:

Such gross breaches of army discipline and immoral actions as absences without leave, participation in drinking orgies, and disrespect to women have not yet been eliminated among Komsomol members. We must rise up in arms against hooliganism--this shameful phenomenon seen in an isolated group of youth, which disrupts military discipline, bringing ugly vestiges of the past into the life of the units. Is disorderly conduct by individual members of the armed services in civilian clubs, dance halls and the cinema not shameful? Or let us take absences without leave. One, two or maybe more of a soldier's or sailor's friends know of his being A. W. O. L. However, individual soldiers, Komsomol members included, follow the principle: "Today I did not see you, and the next day you will not see me" (Krasnaya Zvezda, July 5, 1961).

To eliminate or at least to reduce these "shortcomings," the Kremlin is diligently attempting to strengthen, as the basic motivating force of the armed services, the effectiveness and will of Party organizations and of the Komsomol. The Party's leadership is particularly pronounced in the draft of the new Party rules; item 65 states that the direction of "Party activities in the armed forces is effected by the Central Committee of CPSU through the Central Political Army Administration"; formerly all supervision of Party life was carried out exclusively by the Central Political Administration.

Of special interest in the Communist leadership's search for improvement of the "moral and political" condition of the armed forces are "military psychology" and "military pedagogy." The military press has featured many articles on these

(more)

subjects during the past several months. Krasnaya Zvezda, for instance, in its June 28, 1961 issue saw an urgent need to work out scientifically a series of psychological and pedagogic problems in the development of Soviet armed forces:

Among these problems must be counted the study of the way contemporary combat conditions influence soldiers' physical and mental reactions; as well as the study of the ways and means of maintaining a high morale in the armed forces. Of utmost importance is the discovery of the psychological basis for education productive of high moral, political, and fighting qualities in Soviet soldiers. . . . The question of how to formulate ideological convictions, how to overcome incorrect views, how to achieve the point at which the political and moral ideas presented to the soldiers will become their own firm convictions in some cases remains without a proper answer. It must be kept in mind that the process of conversion of knowledge into convictions is complicated and often prolonged; it must be brought about by constantly influencing the minds and feelings of the soldiers. . . . A laboratory has been established in the V. I. Lenin Military Political Academy to work out problems of pedagogy and psychology for the Armed Forces.

The introduction of a compulsory and urgent examination of problems of military psychology and pedagogy and of related questions, is clear evidence that Soviet leaders have become aware of spiritual trends in the Soviet Army that are dangerous for their policy, and are searching for new ways of overcoming them. It is particularly significant that these subjects, essentially new to military science, are already being worked out by the academy engaged in the training of basic army personnel.

Formerly the basic factors of victory in Soviet military doctrine were iron discipline, the complete isolation of military personnel from the outside world and even from their own country's population, and brutal terror and repressions. Now all these premises have ceased to exist or have become considerably weaker, forcing the Communist top echelon to search for new ways of restoring the weak "moral and political" consciousness of the army.

Soviet military doctrine in general is closely related to this problem. The technical revolution and atomic rearmament of today's army have, in their turbulent development, contributed to making all the old established concepts obsolete. Moreover, they have brought about a search among the officers of the Soviet armed forces for new ideas, which in some cases led to new individualistic philosophies of life. Extensive discussions and arguments dealing with military theory and strategy take place among members of the army staff. The old and established Soviet military doctrine is antiquated, and a new one has not yet emerged.

(more)

Soviet society, in accordance with the draft of the new CPSU program, has entered the 20-year phase in the building of Communism. In order to achieve cohesion of all the levels and classes of its society, which theoretically is one of the basic premises of Communism, it is absolutely necessary to achieve a final approximation of spiritual and of so-called "production" relations within the society. In this task the Kremlin is faced with insurmountable difficulties as far as the Soviet armed forces are concerned. On the one hand the Kremlin is planning to use all the means of strengthening the army's fighting capacity. Since this is impossible by propaganda means alone, attempts will have to be made to preserve the former caste system. On the other hand, the Kremlin must yield to the internal processes developing within the Soviet society and make some concessions of principles. These are two essentially incompatible trends. Under contemporary Soviet conditions, any attempts to preserve absolute discipline in the armed forces and to cultivate their "selfless" fighting spirit can result only in a compromise.

(111761)